

# SOUTHERN CROSS

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Co-editors — Pastor A. J. HENNE & CYRIL S. CHU

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## ROOPNARINE JOHN SINGH ORDAINED

*"In order for the Evangelical Lutheran Church to carry out this commission of her Lord it is incumbent upon the church to seek from its membership worthy young men with commitment to the call of Christ and His Church."*

From **A Statement of Training for the Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana (1958), p. 1.**

Evidence that the search is bearing increasing fruit was impressively shown at the ordination of Mr. Roopnarine John Singh at Ebenezer Church New Amsterdam, on May 29.

A congregation of no less than 500 persons witnessed the ancient ritual of the laying on of hands, first recorded in the Book of the Acts when Barnabus and Saul were set apart for the work of the ministry in the church at Antioch.

The Rev. A. R. Bowen, President of the Church, conducted the Order for Ordination, assisted by Pastors W. E. Cox, D. R. Gebert and A. J. Henne. The Ordination was the fourth to take place in the Lutheran Church in British Guiana since 1936, and makes Mr. Singh the third Guianese Lutheran now wearing the stole of the ministry in the local church.

Pastor Singh began his full-time service in the church nearly a decade ago when he entered the Lutheran Training Institute. Consecrated as a catechist in 1952, Pastor Singh undertook assignments in the Bel Air and Lower Corentyne Parishes. He later left for the United States to pursue advanced studies. While enrolled at



*"I now commit unto thee the Holy Office of the Word and Sacraments....."*

Ordinand R. John Singh receiving the commission of the ministry. Officiating 1. to r: Pastor A. J. Henne, President Bowen, Pastors D. R. Gebert and W. E. Cox.

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, Mr. Singh was approved as a protege for the ministry. He enrolled in Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary and was graduated with the Bachelor of Divinity degree on May 13, 1960.

One week after his ordination Pastor Singh was installed in the West Coast Berbice Parish by President Bowen, and



## Roopnarine John Singh Ordained — Continued

is now residing at Armadale with his wife, the former Bissoon Dyal, and three sons.

The new pastor is the first of the latest group of ministerial candidates to return to service in British Guiana. By 1962 it is expected that the staff of national pastors will triple in number to nine, thus indicating continued progress toward a larger national ministry. In addition to these who are presently in training at Waterloo Seminary, Canada, there are two ministerial candidates enrolled in pre-seminary studies at the Inter-American University, Puerto Rico

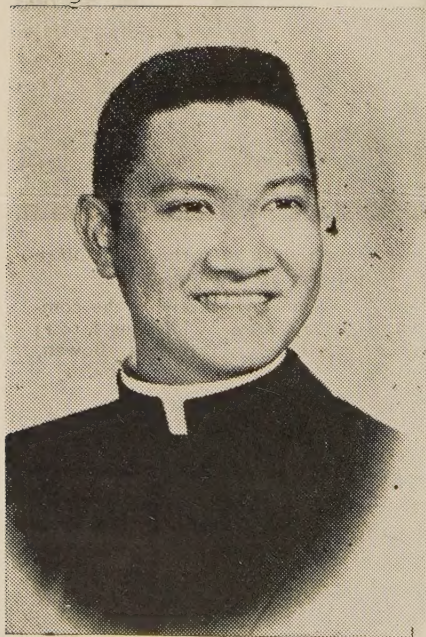
Though the program for training national pastors was started in a uniform way only as recently as 1954, the trend toward a national ministry which

is steadily developing in the Lutheran Church in British Guiana is achieving a goal which has been long established. The local trend is paralleling similar developments in other Lutheran mission fields, notably India, Japan, Africa and Argentina.

With a growing consciousness of political independence coming to British Guiana no more than a few years hence, the church realises the necessity of relating its work closely to the life of the new country which is to emerge, and the corresponding importance of training a ministry which is representative of a truly Guianese Church.

The ordination of Roopnarine John Singh is a further sign that this realisation is being fulfilled.

## PASTOR CLINTON CHU SERVES IN HAWAII UNDER FORMER MISSIONARY TO BRITISH GUIANA



"Rev. Clinton Chu"  
Now serving in Hawaii.

Probably un-noticed by many Lutherans because of its distant setting, but no less deserving the attention and appreciation of the local church, was the ordination in the United States of another son the Lutheran Church in British Guiana: Mr. Clinton Chu, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Chu, New Amsterdam.

Clinton Chu left British Guiana in 1953 to pursue studies at Wittenburg University, Springfield, Ohio, and was graduated in 1957 with the B.A. degree. His decision to enter the ministry led him to enter the University's Hamma Divinity School, where he gained a Bachelor of Divinity degree in May of this year.

Mr. Chu, with a group of other ordinands, was ordained by the Ohio Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America at First English Lutheran Church, Cincinnati, in May.



**Pastor Clinton Chu — Continued**

Following his graduation from seminary, Mr. Chu received and accepted a call from the Board of American Missions, the continental missions agency in America, to serve in Hawaii, recently become famous as the fiftieth state in the union. Pastor Chu will be serving under a former pastor in British Guiana, the Rev. Gene Vosseler. Pastor Chu's challenging first assignment: development of a new mission

in the growing area Waimanalo. Pastor Chu's ministry takes him over 2,000 miles from the mainland.

Though educated and trained independently of the local church Pastor Chu as a son of the Lutheran Church in British Guiana in a real way represents a contribution of the local church toward the ministry of church at large.

**CATECHIST TRAINEES BEGIN STUDIES**

Two lay readers have recently been accepted as candidates for catechist, and are now taking a two-month study leave in New Amsterdam to become qualified. They are S. Abdool, worker at Messiah, Non Pareil, and Rudolph Loy, worker and school teacher at Hururu, Berbice River.

Mr. Abdool had earlier completed one year of studies at the Lutheran Training Institute, and would have completed the course but for the discontinuation of the L.T.I. in April 1957. His present studies are intended to complete his training.

Mr. Loy, having worked as head teacher of the school and reader for the congregation at Hururu since October 1956, is following an intensive course of study patterned after the former L.T.I. program.

The curriculum, planned by Pastor A. J. Henne, provides studies in bible, doctrine, church history and the practical aspects of church work. Tutors for the courses are Pastors D. R. Gebert, W. E. Cox, E. B. Meyer, A. J. Henne and ministerial students Desmond Hamlet and James Masih Das. The course will end on August 6.

This small-scale re-opening of the L.T.I. for eight weeks will be an experiment in the possibility of re-activating the L.T.I. at future intervals for the purpose of providing refresher studies for catechist and other laymen or laywomen of the church. Although the present program for training ministers is gradually reducing the need to train new Catechists, there is continuing need to offer refresher work for workers and other laymen who are actively engaged in church service.

**A NEW CONGREGATION IS BORN**

Latest addition to the family of congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in British Guiana is the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Edinburgh Village, East Bank, Berbice. This congregation came into existence at its very first service on Sunday, January 31st, when twenty-nine persons were received into membership.

The idea for the planting of the church in this area began in May 1959, when two ladies of the village walked four and one half miles to Ebenezer Church, New Amsterdam, to attend a class of catechetical instructions. Both ladies expressed to Pastor Cox the idea that others in their village would also be interested. Shortly here-



## New Congregation — Continued

after a class was started in an old community dance hall in the area. Classes met weekly under the direction of Pastor Cox and seminary student, James Dookram.

In November 1959, a Sunday School was started for the children. An average attendance of 50 is maintained weekly in the school. With the beginning of the first service, still in the

dance hall, the members of the congregation began asking for a more suitable place to worship. With the help of the Church and the Board of Foreign Missions, property was purchased, and after remodelling and painting a bottom house chapel was dedicated on Sunday, May 22, 1960. The congregation is thankful to the Church, to the Board of Foreign Missions and to the Lord for planting the Church in their midst.

## LUTHER LEAGUERS SPARK NEW WORK IN SHEET ANCHOR

Sheet Anchor had only a Sunday School. Perhaps it never would have developed into anything more if it hadn't been for some young people from Betsy Ground who lighted the spark.

One day at their Luther League meeting, they were asked by Catechist David Totaram what they thought about the possibilities of starting a congregation at Sheet Anchor. The reply was something like this .... "Only one way to find out, let's take a census." "But," it was pointed out, "the only time any of you can help is on Saturday afternoons, and you will have to cycle 9 miles just to get there and back."

The decision was made, plans were laid, census forms were obtained from the Evangelism Office, and the Catechist and Pastor waited at Sheet Anchor for the census-takers to arrive. They came, 10 of them, received instructions, had prayer, and went to work. They returned before dark, very tired. They had made a good beginning, but had only covered a small part of the district. Could they come back again next Saturday? Silence. Then someone said, "no point in stopping now. We'll be here." And they were, again and again for about six weeks until finally they reported the work finished.

The results? Over 100 homes had indicated a definite interest in helping to start a congregation. One person said, "we've been waiting for this for

years." Another said, "at last."

Catechist Totaram and Pastor Gebert went together to all the homes where interest had been expressed. They pointed out what the Church is and what it stands for — worship of God and denial of self, and obedience to the way of Christ and the Cross. "Don't come if you are looking for a hand-out for a job." Would they come when services finally got started? On June 12, 1960, at 7.00 p.m. the first service was scheduled to begin. The rains fell most of the day — a very bad sign. At 7.00 o'clock 10 people had arrived. "Wait a few minutes," said one of the men. "More will come." By 7.15 p.m. 65 people were present. The following Sunday 85 people turned out. The spark had now become a flame.

About 30 people will soon be joining by transfer, about 50 others are already attending instruction classes, and there are 60 little children from these same homes being offered for infant baptism.

Sheet Anchor was just a Sunday School. It will soon be a congregation, and a strong one, thanks to an inspiring Catechist and some inspired young people. These same Luther Leaguers, by the way, have now decided to take another census next month — this time in Canefield Village.

East Canje is on fire! That is what can happen when young people take the Church and the Gospel seriously.



## "OPERATION CHURCH BUILDER"

In March of this year, Ebenezer Church held a series of meetings for the congregation under the theme "Operation Church Builder" in the interest of its stewardship program. The meetings were well attended and the program equally well received. Under the direction of the stewardship chairman, Mr. Daniel Ramnarine, presentation were made by various laymen of the church. Following these presentations a stewardship film was shown, and the meeting came to a fitting close with each person bringing his pledge card forward to place it on the Altar.

Enthusiasm ran high during the meetings when plans for a new Ebenezer Church were discussed. The congregation was challenged to its responsibility in this new venture. It is hoped that the new building will be started within the next few months.

The Stewardship Committee and Church Vestry have been pleased with the results of these meetings. Giving has increased by more than 100% in recent weeks. It is now hoped that our apportionment of \$4,640.00 and our Building Fund Goal of \$2,600.00 will be met in full this year.

## UPPER BERBICE RIVER PARISH

*Pastor A. J. HENNE.*

Heavy rains have swollen the Berbice River so badly in some upper districts near Kwakwani that houses have been inundated. Already early in June, and still facing the prospect of more rains during July, residents were seen floating their canoes at floor-level to their front doors.

In other areas the river has nearly reached the level of the stellings.

The rains have helped the loggers who need a high water level to float down timbers from the upper reaches of the creeks. But in many areas the farmers have been plagued by the wetness in harvesting crops.

Farmers on the river district are now benefitting from a new arrangement in selling their produce, enabling them to transact cash sales directly with the government buyer aboard the weekly steamer. Previously, farmers had to wait for payment until the shipments were weighed in New Amsterdam. The new arrangement avoids delay in receiving payment; what is more, farmers can see their weights first-hand at the time of sale. Occasional discoveries of sub-standard produce,

however, make government buyers wary of continuing the present practice unless farmers ensure that shipments are good.

A new head teacher, Mr. S. Ramtahal, was appointed in April to fill the position at Atonement School, Ebeni. Mr. Ramtahal is a graduate of the Government Training College, and taught previously at Novar, Mahaicony. Atonement School had been without a head teacher for the entire Easter term.

Two new aluminium houses are soon to be erected for catechists at Kimbia and Ituni. An all-greenheart pre-fab house is planned also for Hururu. The change to aluminium construction has been caused by the unreliability wooden buildings in the past, and the extreme difficulty and expense in maintenance in remote areas. The greenheart house proposed for Hururu is a pre-fabricated unit manufactured by B G. Timbers, and is expected to be considerably more durable than existing houses on the river. Although contracts for the houses have not yet been let, it is expected that the combined cost of the buildings will be about \$15,000.



## EBENEZER CHURCH BUILDS ANEW

### Its History A Story of Great Problems But Even Greater Accomplishments.

Ebenezer Church, New Amsterdam, an historic landmark for the Lutheran Church and colony, will soon be replaced by the new building. Many people are not aware of the history and tradition that surrounds the present church edifice. It is the mother church of Protestant Christendom in the colony, and one writer points to it as the oldest Lutheran Church still in existence on the continent of South America.

The congregation was organised on the 15th October, 1743, in the home of Mr. Lodwig R. Abbensetts at Plantation La Solitude, a short distance above and opposite Fort Nassau on the Berbice River. It grew out of the desires of Dutch planters who had been nurtured in the Lutheran faith and who felt, as one of their old records states, that "they were like so many sheep without a shepherd."

Following the organization of the congregation, the membership desired a pastor and a building in which to worship. Applying to the consistory in Amsterdam, Holland, they were told that "the expenses of said Minister and of the house in which he was to reside and also the church building.....should be defrayed by members of the congregation themselves and not at the charge of the Directors." With these financial responsibilities facing them, the congregation set about its task and after nine years of work the first pastor, the Rev. Johun Kendrick, reached Fort Nassau on October 15, 1752. Services were held in the spacious mansion of Jan Rijman. It was sometime that a church building was erected for the worshipping congregation in the vicinity of Fort Nassau.

In the slave uprising in 1762, Fort Nassau was laid waste with only the Lutheran property remaining intact. Some years later when the present town of New Amsterdam was laid out,

the church was dismantled, placed on punts and transported to its present location. Through the years various renovation programs have taken place to restore and modernize the building, but basically the structure is still the same as the one brought down the river from Fort Nassau.

If walls could speak, there could be some very interesting stories that this church could tell us. Today we think of it as primarily a church for a Lutheran congregation, but there have been years in its history when Reformed, Anglicans and Methodists have used it as a house of worship. There have been great problems but even greater accomplishments. A church that was originally intended to serve a congregation of Dutch planters eventually became a church to serve all the Guianese people.

No glance no matter how small at the history of Ebenezer Church would be complete without at least a mention of the name of John Robert Mittelholzer who served as pastor from 1878 to 1913. It was through this man's devoted service and care for his people that the congregation expanded and became a strong church in the New Amsterdam community. Through the efforts of Pastor Mittelholzer, the congregation was received into membership of the East Pennsylvania Synod of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States in the year 1890. In 1918 when the General Synod was merged into a new church, the United Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran work in British Guiana became the responsibility of the present Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America.

In a few more months this historic building will be removed to make room for a new Ebenezer, but never will it be removed from the memories of those who have worshipped there.



**Ebenezer Church — Continued**

It will always remain as a symbol of inspiration and faith to many. Over its doorway are the Latin words "Soli Deo Gloria," ( To the Glory of God alone ). It has been just that in the past two hundred years, and whether present or removed it will always continue to be that.

The new Ebenezer is being designed by the architectural firm of Mence and Moore under the direction of Mr. Patrick Barnes. It will be a concrete structure seating approximately four hundred people. Contemporary in design it will continue to speak the glory of God in the finest tradition of Ebenezer Church.

**GOOD SHEPHERD, Rosignol, West Bank, Berbice.**

*Rev. W. E. COX (Acting)*

*Catechist E. MUCKUNLALL*

**LUTHER LEAGUE RALLY**

The Luther League of the West Coast Berbice Parish held their Rally at the above-named church on 5th June. We are glad to report that we were able to reach our objective of twenty six dollars. A game of volley ball was played among Leaguers on the church compound. It is hoped that a team will be selected to take part in a volley ball competition to be played after the Luther League Convention at Skeldon.

**CHILDREN'S ATHLETIC SPORT**

We are thankful to the management of Blairmont Estate and their com-

mittees concerned in allowing us to use the Community Centre ground on Whit Monday. We also thank them for the use of their public-address system. Sunday School children right through from Burma participated in the sports. In general, we had a very nice day because the workers cooperated to their fullest.

**PARISH CONFERENCE**

Parish Conference was held at Good Shepherd Church on 7th June. At this time the Rev. Singh was introduced and welcomed to Conference, and he suitably replied.

**Excerpts from a Statement Issued by the Christian Social Council**

**Editors' Note :** The statements below are quoted from a recent pamphlet issued by the Christian Social Council, an association of nine major church and religious bodies in British Guiana, including the Lutheran. Titled, "The States and Its Citizens: A Statement Issued by the Christian Social Council," the pamphlet attempts to explain the authority and limits of the state and the relation which citizens should have to it.

The Lutheran Church has not adopted nor otherwise endorsed the statement in any official action. Since the statement will not generally be read from Lutheran pulpits, the editors offer parts of it to our readers as an example of recent opinion by the churches.

The pamphlet in one place makes unveiled reference to the matter of control of education, and to some other issues (ownership of property, trade unions, etc.) which have been receiving public attention recently, and has most probably been prompted by the growing controversy occurring at the present time over these issues.

"We live in an age in which new nations are being born, and British Guiana itself aspires to nationhood. It is imperative for success that our ideas of nationhood should be inspired by, and be consistent with what God intends. For that, God's plan must be known and properly understood.

"Christian teaching helps us to understand God's plan, but the plan itself is not just something for those who are Christians. It is a plan for the whole human race, based upon the human nature given by God to man.....



## Christian Social Council — Continued

"Men have always found the need of uniting together in societies larger than the family for mutual aid. Such union has been necessary to ensure development in many different fields, to secure protection from wrong-doers and aggressors, and in order that some authority may exist to defend just rights and to provide laws and regulations required for the common well-being when a number of people live together in close proximity.

"The purpose of the State, then, is to procure the common good of the citizens while they live in this world. Sometimes this will mean asking sacrifices of the few for the sake of the many, and clearly the State must have a special care for the poor and weak who are less able to help themselves. But the general purpose of Government is to secure the common good of all in the course of human life.

"Though Government rules, the task of those who govern is to serve the people. Those in authority have not been put in power to satisfy their human vanity or for self-aggrandisement. It would be an abuse for those in power to use their authority not to promote the common good but for their own ends — to feather their own nests or to pay off old scores.

"No authority given by God to the State can override these natural rights given by God to the individual.

"Such rights include:

- The right of the innocent to life,
- The right to marry,
- The right of parents to control the education of their children,
- The right of a man to support himself and his family by honest work,
- The right to acquire private property,
- The right to associate together, e.g. in trade unions,
- The right to follow conscience above all,
- The right to practice religion and serve God.

"Unless these rights are respected there can be no true democracy. Without respect for these rights there can be no just government.

"In British Guiana all adult citizens are voters. They decide who shall exercise the power of government. Voters have a very serious responsibility before God: firstly, that of actually making use of their vote and, secondly, that of using their vote for a worthy and suitable candidate.

"No vote may be given for a candidate who opposes the rights of God or of religion or the God-given rights of the individual.

"The duty of voting also brings with it the obligation to try to understand the problems which face the country, so as to be able to vote responsibly and intelligently."

"Once a Government is elected, just as the Government must work for the common good of the whole people, so the people must recognise and obey the justly exercised authority of their elected Government. But this does not exclude the right of fair criticism of the acts of those who rule.

"British Guiana is a country composed of different races. There is a greater danger, therefore, of division of racialism. It is only by the co-operation of all citizens that the well-being of the country as a whole will be served, that the rights of individuals, families and minority groups will be respected, and that racial tension will be overcome. Thus only will the happiness of all be achieved.